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TRACES OF CLASSICAL STYLE IN POETRY OF THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Since the publication in 1885 of Mr. Gosse's well known volume "From Shakespeare to Pope," there seems to have been a renewed interest in what may be called the second great movement in modern English literature, the reaction toward classicism which began in the early seventeenth century and ended only with the revival of romanticism at the end of the century following. From time to time since then articles have appeared which aim to show the importance of individual writers in forwarding or even inaugurating this movement. Thus Mr. Gosse himself is chiefly concerned in defending the eighteenth century notion that Edmund Waller was the poet who led the straying muse out of the mire where the later Elizabethans had left her and set her on the right path, and this view has been so widely accepted that one not infrequently finds Waller spoken of as "the founder of the classical school." Professor F. E. Schelling¹ has also called attention to the influence of Ben Jonson; and Dr. Henry Wood² has praised the regularity of the paraphrases and translations of George Sandys.

In their preoccupation with individual writers, however, all these investigations are somewhat misleading. The opinion has been expressed, by Professor Alden and others, that the movement was more general and involved more men than has com-

¹ Publications of the Modern Language Association (XIII, p. 227).

² *American Journal of Philology* (XI, p. 55).

monly been supposed, that it began earlier than Waller or Sandys, and that in the first two decades of the seventeenth century Jonson was not the only poet who was polishing his couplets and working in other ways toward the later style. This opinion needs strengthening; and it is my object, accordingly, to show how the increasing domination of intellect over imagination, fact over fiction, and law over license was widespread among the writers of the period. With this object in view the treatment will necessarily be somewhat scattering; and it will be my aim to touch upon many writers and influences rather than to treat thoroughly any one. I should like in particular to call attention to the Elizabethan and Jacobean satirists, and also to the group of court poets, including Sir John Beaumont, Drummond of Hawthornden, and Jonson, who were celebrating royal marriages and anniversaries in the reign of James I. Something may also be said of the influence of the King himself as a poetaster and critic of poetry.

In discussing these writers a good deal of attention has always been given, and will be given here, to matters of versification, and especially to the development of the so-called classical heroic couplet. This, it is true, places in the background some of the fundamental distinctions between classical and romantic style — that for instance between order and confusion in the whole composition, which Jonson has in mind when he would have us take heed that our style “be not winding, or wanton with far-fetched descriptions,” and Gabriel Harvey when he says a poem should be “well grounded, finely framed, and well trussed up together;” the distinction also between poetry of the intellectual and poetry of the emotional type. Still the limitation may be justified. A surprising quantity of verse was written in the first quarter of the seventeenth century in which the intellectual element is predominant, and which so far as form in the whole composition is concerned is fairly respectable. Indeed, were we to base our judgment on these distinctions, Waller would at once have to share his fame as forerunner of the classical school with a whole group of other poets. But the basis on which Waller’s reputation is really placed is the skill, which he undoubtedly possessed, and which is supposed to distinguish him from his predecessors,

in the handling of the pentameter couplet. Hence in questioning the emphasis placed on Waller the structure of the couplet becomes a crucial test.

Apart from this it is in itself interesting and profitable to trace the beginnings of the measure which at this time took possession of English poetry and held every writer under its sway for a hundred and fifty years. And here we are at least on solid ground. Here one may with some show of mathematical accuracy put one's finger on traces of classical style. Statistical enumeration of metrical peculiarities may seem a trivial occupation, we shall see that it is at times fallacious, but that it is a valuable corrective of *a priori* or hastily formed impressions can hardly be doubted. With this preparation, I may venture the statement that the conclusions which follow are corrected and often guided by just this kind of analysis.

As a matter of fact, the differences in effect between the "classical" couplet of Dryden and Pope and the "romantic" couplet of Browne, Chapman, and John Fletcher in the seventeenth century and Keats and Shelley in the nineteenth, may be traced in a large degree to certain metrical peculiarities. Briefly stated, these are as follows: (1) in classical poetry there is a tendency toward distich; (2) there is greater regularity or smoothness; (3) the lines are lighter and swifter.

These statements may need some explanation. By "a tendency toward distich" I mean that writers of the school of Pope bound their thoughts to the limits of the couplet, instead of letting it run on without pause to the couplet following. One may read page after page of the poet just mentioned without finding a single couplet that is run-on, and without finding a full pause or stop (such as that at the end of a sentence) anywhere else in the couplet. The romantic poets, on the other hand, pay little attention to the couplet as a verse-unit and indicate breaks in the thought by pauses which are as likely to occur within the line as at the end. Classical tendency then, is indicated by avoidance of run-on lines and couplets, and of marked pauses within the line.

The second quality, that of "smoothness," is secured by various means. The absence of full pauses within the couplet con-

tributes to that effect. Again, even the cæsural pauses, when they occur, are chiefly medial—that is they fall after the fourth, fifth, or sixth syllable of the line. And it is scarcely necessary to add that a cæsura so placed detracts less from the smoothness and balance of a line than one placed elsewhere. Finally, there are fewer variant feet. Trochees, except at the beginning of the line where they attract little attention, are rare; spondees, well defined anapæsts, and deficient feet are infrequent; the regular iambic movement of the line is maintained.

The third quality, that of "lightness and swiftness," is not so easily accounted for. It is obtained partly by an increased proportion of lines that have but a slight cæsura or none at all, partly by a larger proportion of light feet. Pyrrhics are frequent, without a spondee near at hand to counterbalance them. In short, the general tendency in classical poetry is toward a line in which the emphasis is concentrated before the cæsura and at the end, as in these lines from Dryden's "MacFlecknoe:"

This aged prince, now flourishing in peace
And blessed with issue of a large increase;
Worn out with business, did at length debate
To settle the succession of the state.

Here are two lines with scarcely a cæsural pause, and in the last there are but three accented syllables. The effect is, monotony perhaps, but also swiftness and vigor.

With this extended enumeration of the marks of classical style, we may now turn to the writers whom I have already mentioned, with the more definite purpose of finding in their verse traces of this regularly enjambed, smoothly and swiftly flowing, and somewhat artificial type of verse that reached its perfection in Dryden and Pope. In this search we should look naturally, I think, to the earlier school of satirists, consisting of Hall, Donne, Rowlands, Marston, Wither, and several others, all of whom were treating the kind of material that became popular later, and treating it in the same general manner. These men at once found the couplet the most effective measure for satirical poetry. "After Lodge, Hall, and Donne," says Professor Alden in his "Rise of Formal Satire in England," "the measure may almost be made a test of the intentionally satiric character of a

poem." It is true that in their couplets one element of the later style, that of regularity, is nearly always lacking. This may be due in part to their Latin models. "The Roman ancients," says Hall in one of his prologues,

Whose words were short and darksome was their sense.
Who reads one line of their harsh poesies
Thrice must he take his wind and breathe him thrice.

Perhaps, too, they deemed a careless and slovenly style appropriate for the scurrilities they frequently indulged in. However that may be, Marston and Donne carried freedom so far that their satires stand in a class by themselves; and as for Lodge, his satires and epistles in "A Fig for Momus" have simply the flowing melody that is found in the couplets of early Elizabethan comedy.

Joseph Hall, though he too has less difficulty than he pretends in imitating the roughness of the ancients, seems to have done more than any other of this group toward moulding the couplet into a form fitted for satire. Warton, the eighteenth century historian of literature, who by virtue of his period was well equipped to judge in the matter, speaks highly of Hall's couplets. "These satires," he notes,³ "are marked with a classical precision to which English poetry had not yet attained—the versification is equally energetic and elegant, and the fabric of the couplet approaches the modern standard."

Energy and elegance, those two qualities the combination of which was at once the achievement and the pride of the later school, are indeed perceptible qualities in the satires of Hall. The following table of statistics will show his relation to other writers of satire, and in particular the resemblance between his work and that of Dryden. Note especially the small percentage of run-on lines and cæsuras. In these respects, as in number of variant cæsuras (not after the fourth, fifth, or sixth syllable) and variant feet, Donne, as might be expected, leads all the rest, closely followed by Jonson and Marston; but the steadily increasing regularity from there down is noteworthy. The figures

³ Unpublished fourth volume of his "History of English Poetry." Chalmers's "British Poets" (V, 226).

indicate that Rowlands, like Hall, wrote with great regularity. His couplets, however, are diffuse, sing-song, and lacking in vigor. Two-thirds of his cæsuras fall after the fourth syllable.

AUTHORS, AND NUMBER LINES FROM EACH	Run-on lines	Run-on couplets	Total cæsuras	Variant cæsuras	VARIANT FEET					Weak Endings	FULL STOPS	
					TROCHEES		Pyrrhics	Spondees	Anapæsts		Within lines	Half-couplets
					First of line	Elsewhere						
Donne, 200 ll. . .	27	6	67	22	25	19	34	40	11	13	1	0
Marston, 100 ll. .	16	9	46	10	6	1	25	22	3	27	9	1
Jonson, 600 ll. . .	26	7.7	65	20	11	4	40	20	8	6	4	2
Hall, 200 ll. . . .	9	1	26	4	13	6	28	19	5	12	1	0
Rowlands, 100 ll.	0	0	36	0	9	4	28	11	3	1	0	0
Dryden, 300 ll. . .	5	1	34	7	11	0	36	8	5	3	0	0
Pope, 400 ll. . . .	3.5	0	43	7	13	0	23	7	7	0	0	0

These figures demonstrate the “elegance” of Hall’s style. Its energy is due to other characteristics, in which again he resembles later writers. Antithesis, epigrammatic brevity of expression, and neat balancing of phrase against phrase and of the first half of a line against the portion following the cæsura, have rightly been reckoned important characteristics of eighteenth century style. These artifices may of course be found in both prose and poetry from the time of Lyly on, but as distinctive and constantly recurring elements in verse they appear first in the Elizabethan satires. Jonson is full of it, but he is following as well as setting the fashion. Hall practices it very frequently. Note the conciseness and clearly antithetical structure of the following passages from Hall’s satires, which were written before the close of the sixteenth century:

Small honor can be got with gaudie grave :
Nor it thy rotten name from death can save.
The fairer tombe, the fouler is thy name,
The greater pomp procuring greater shame.
Thy monument make thou thy living deeds;
No other tomb than that true virtue needs.
—*Satires* (III, ii).

’Mongst all these stirs of discontented strife,
Oh let me lead an Academic life.

To know much and to think we nothing know:
Nothing to have, yet think we have enough,
In skill to want, and wanting seek for more,
In weal not want, nor wish for greater store:
Envye ye monarchs, with your proud excess,
At our low saile and our high happiness.

— *Virgidemiarum* (IV, vi).

These passages sufficiently illustrate Hall's style. The absence of the final polish and ease of later work is only too apparent. None of these writers was greatly concerned over a misplaced accent, an extra syllable, a weak ending, or a short foot. Such details were sure to be improved as the writing of satires continued, and as satire came to be considered a legitimate form of poetry. The important point is that Hall, Rowlands and others recognized that the end-stopped line was better fitted to their subject-matter and practiced it with the greatest regularity, and that it is in this direction we must look for the development of antithesis and for early examples of lines full of vigor and power of striking home.

It is not inappropriate that the name of Ben Jonson should follow those we have just treated, for in one phase of his work at least he was in close accord with contemporary writers of epistle, epigram and satire. Yet as the dominating personality of his age and as a writer active in many fields of literature he deserves fuller treatment than can be given here. His influence was undoubtedly greater than that of any other writer, not excepting Donne, on the poets of his own and the following generation. On making this statement one naturally thinks not only of Donne, but also in spite of the comparative insignificance into which he has sunk with the lapse of years, of Edmund Waller, among the poets of his time, as his epitaph reads, "*facile princeps*." But if the Sacharissa Cycle, "The Battle of the Summer Islands," and the rest of Waller's smoothly flowing, neatly phrased poems had never been written, it is hard to imagine that English poetry would have taken a very different turn from what it did. No one can believe that the powerful genius of Dryden, once free from the influence of Donne as seen in the conceits of his early poem on the death of Hastings, would not have found its way to the swift vigor of his later style.

We have seen the form satirical verse was beginning to exhibit from the time the couplet was adopted, and it is pretty clear that this form continued to develop in satirical poetry down to the time of Dryden, and needed only his genius for its perfection. Jonson's influence was not so prominent in polishing the couplet as in shaping the form of lyric verse and in opposing the school of Donne. As Professor Wendell says in his "Temper of the Seventeenth Century:" "With him classicism meant the expression of sound sense in pure language. One is hardly apt, accordingly, to group him with the deliberate pseudo-classic writers of later times, who imposed on English the bondage of the heroic couplet."

It is on this point that the views of Professor Schelling in his excellent article on "Ben Jonson and the Classical School" seem to need considerable modification, and it is the only point to which we need give attention here. That Jonson drew his theory of poetry from the ancients and based his practice on their sounder precepts; that his classical tastes are manifested in condensation of thought, repression of over-ornateness, form in the whole composition, and purity of diction; that his choice of subjects indicates classical tendency—all this we may grant. But the statement that "the couplet in Jonson's hands exhibits in a lesser degree all those peculiarities which characterize its later use in the hands of Dryden and Pope," is surely open to question.

In supporting this statement Professor Schelling disregards irregularity of metre, in which Jonson is a notable offender, and confines his investigation to the following points: (1) number of run-on lines and couplets; (2) number and position of cæsuras; (3) epigrammatic or antithetical structure. On the first two points he adopts the statistical method, and we shall find it interesting, I think, to compare his figures with those of Professor Alden in his book on "English Verse," with Dr. Wood's on Sandys, and with my own. The comparison will at least reveal the merits and weaknesses of the method employed. In each case the figures are percentages based on from two hundred to six hundred or more lines.⁴ Professor Schelling's figures and my

⁴ For the passages chosen consult Alden and Schelling.

own are taken from the same passages in Sandys and Spenser; in the case of Jonson I have taken his passages (six hundred lines), and three hundred lines in addition.

AUTHOR	RUN-ON LINES			RUN-ON COUPLETS		
	Schelling	Alden	Westcott	Schelling	Alden	Westcott
Spenser.....	19.5	14	10	5	4	3
Jonson.....	21.8	26	25.8	4.4	8	7.7
Sandys.....	22.6	14.3*	21	5	1.8*	5
Waller.....	12.5	16	19	3.5	2	4
Dryden.....	7.6	11	6	.6	1	.25
Pope.....	5.5	4	4	0	0	0

* Wood.

Now it can hardly be argued even on Professor Schelling's figures that Jonson resembles the later school in avoiding run-on lines and couplets. And if we accept the higher percentages upon which Professor Alden and myself are practically agreed (twenty-six run-on lines and eight run-on couplets), we must conclude that no writer in this period, with the exception of such eccentrics as Donne and Chapman, and few in any period, use run-on lines with greater freedom and violence. It may be added that his practice in this respect is varied, and that at times he is more careless than at others. Thus in the "Epistle to Selden" we find forty-three per cent run-on lines and nineteen run-on couplets, but in one hundred lines of the "Execration upon Vulcan," only thirteen and two, respectively. In the case of Jonson, therefore, I am inclined to think that to argue from these figures would be to confound classicism with painstaking and romanticism with carelessness.

Professor Schelling next considers the percentage of lines with no cæsure, and the percentage of lines in which the cæsure is medial, *i. e.*, falls after the fourth, fifth, or sixth syllable and thus divided the line into fairly equal parts. Let us again compare the three tables:

AUTHOR	NO CÆSURA			MEDIAL			VARIANT		
	Schelling	Alden	Westcott	S.	A.	W.	S.	A.	W.
Spenser.....	59	64	55	35	31	36	6	5	9
Donne.....			33			45			22
Jonson.....	26	29	35	55	48	45	19	23	20
Sandys.....	47		58	40		32	13		10
Waller.....	36	42	53	56	50	37	8	8	10
Dryden.....	36	40	66	53	52	26	11	8	8
Pope.....	21	44	56	67	47	36	11	9	8

Here Professor Schelling reaches novel conclusions, which though in a way justified by his figures, are by no means satisfying. He makes two groups of writers; one consisting of Spenser and his followers and Sandys, whose lines are marked by a loose structure and few cæsural pauses; the other consisting of Jonson, Waller, Dryden, and Pope, whose lines are marked by shorter clauses, interpolation, and insertion, resulting in a larger number of cæsuras. There is a degree of truth in this classification. Such men as Spenser, Drayton, and to some extent Sandys, employ periodic structure and climactic effects far less than do Dryden, Pope, or Jonson. On the other hand, as is pointed out by Professor Saintsbury in his "Life of Dryden," the versification of the classical school is marked by greater swiftness and lightness, due largely to a *smaller* number of cæsuras. Here our figures, based on honest opinions of the way the lines should be read, show curious disagreement. We all agree in giving Jonson few lines without cæsura. We disagree over Dryden and Pope. Professor Schelling gives Pope twenty-one lines without cæsura, Dryden thirty-six; I find fifty-six and sixty-six, respectively; Professor Alden gives Pope forty-four, and surely errs in giving the more rapid lines of Dryden but forty. The reader may turn to the two poets and decide for himself. It is at least true that if Jonson is akin to the later writers on account of frequency of cæsura, so also is crabbed John Donne, whose use of the cæsura is almost identical with that of Jonson. And if we consider the number of irregular or variant cæsuras, Donne and Jonson use twice as many as any other writer we have studied. On this whole question of form in the couplet, Professor Schelling, when he says that Jonson's

couplet "exemplifies all the characteristics which with greater emphasis came in time to distinguish the manner and versification of Waller and Dryden," is less in the right than Macaulay when he compares them to "blocks rudely hewn out by an unpracticed hand with a blunt hatchet."

It must be remembered that the epigrammatic tendency in Jonson is marked. In this respect, as in many others, he resembles the writers of his period, and particularly the early school of satirists. His affinity with these men deserves emphasis. In his satirical and epistolary writings, which form the bulk of his non-dramatic poetry, he resembles them in vigor, in compactness, and even in roughness. For if Ben would have had Donne hung "for not keeping of accent," I am not sure that he himself should not have been pilloried for similar offenses. In his more painstaking work, however, he attained considerable fluency and ease; and in his strictly lyrical verse he influenced the form of that type of poetry to an extent that cannot easily be overestimated.

I add a fairly complete collection, taken from the "Discoveries" and the "Conversations With Drummond," of the scraps of doctrine which Jonson threw out bearing on this subject:

I know nothing can conduce more to letters than to examine the writings of the ancients, and not to rest in their sole authority or take all upon trust from them. . . . It is true they opened the gates and made the way, that went before us; but as guides, not commanders.—*Discoveries* (XXI).

As we should take care that our style in writing be neither dull nor empty, we should look again it be not winding, or wanton in far-fetched descriptions: either is a vice.—*Ibid.* (CXVI).

Pure and neat language I love, yet plain and customary. A barbarous phrase hath often made me out of love with good sense, and doubtful writing has wracked me beyond my patience.—*Ibid.* (CXVIII).

That he had an intention to perfect an Epick Poem . . . it is all in couplets for he detesteth all other rimes. Said he had written a Discourse on Poesie both against Campion and Daniel, especially this last, where he proves couplets to be the bravest sort of verse, especially when they are broken like hexameters; and that crosse rimes and stanzaes (because the purpose would lead him beyond right lines to conclude) were all forced.—*Conversations With Drummond* (Cunningham ed., III, p. 470).

That Donne, for not keeping of accent, deserved hanging.—*Ibid.* (p. 471).

That he wroth all his verses first in prose, for so his master Cambden had learned him. That verses stood by sense, without colours or accent. [But this at other times he denied]—*Ibid.* (p. 486).

Among Ben Jonson's epigrams occurs the following (No. 4), celebrating King James's glory as prince and poet:

How, best of kings, dost thou a scepter bear?
 How, best of poets, dost thou laurel wear?
 But two things rare the Fates had in their store,
 And gave thee both, to show they could do no more.⁵
 For such a poet, while thy days were green,
 Thou wert, as chief of them are said t' have been.
 And such a prince thou art, we daily see,
 As chief of those still promise they will be.
 Whom should thy muse then fly to, but the best
 Of kings, for grace; of poets, for my test?

These epigrams were first published in 1616, and Bishop Montague's collected edition of the writings of King James also appeared that year. Whether Jonson had an opportunity to see this edition before writing his epigram, or whether, as is likely, he was previously familiar with the King's essays in verse and criticism, does not matter for us here. It seems clear at least that the appearance of the edition was the signal for a more general recognition of the King's claims as a poet.

The most definite and noteworthy instance of this recognition is found in the works of Sir John Beaumont. Among his poems, which Grosart⁶ shows were written all through the period from 1602 to his death in 1627, occurs a composition of some seventy carefully polished lines "To his late Majesty, concerning the true form of English Poetry." These lines, which were probably written soon after the appearance of the Montague edition, the "late" being supplied by the first editor, indicate a careful study of the King's "Reules and Cauteles,"⁷ a treatise on versification which he wrote as a boy of eighteen in Scotland. Since the influence of the King on contemporary poetry has never been

⁵ The conceit and the phrasing of these lines show that they were in Dryden's memory when he wrote his famous motto under Milton's portrait.

⁶ Introduction to his edition of Beaumont in the "Fuller Worthies" Series (1869). The edition followed is the first and posthumous edition of 1629.

⁷ For a modern edition see R. S. Raits "A Royal Rhetorician," Westminster (1900).

fully treated, I have thought it worth while to compare the essay and the poem in detail. In the summary of King James will be found nearly all of his advice on versification that could have been understood and applied by English readers. From Sir John I have taken only the passages in which he seems to be restating or paraphrasing the King's opinions. In other portions of the poem he adds a good deal of his own theory, which was on the whole very sensible and practical:

Reules and Cauteles. Rule I. "That ye keep just colouris;" *i. e.*, avoid rhyming with the same word, rhyme on the accented syllable and from there to the end, and avoid rhymes of three or even two syllables, the last of which are "eaten up in the pronouncing."

Beaumont repeats this idea, but appears to be uncertain about the meaning of the word "colouris:"

. To teach
Your English poets to direct their lines
To mix their colors and express their signs.—(ll. 4-6).

Our Saxon shortness hath peculiar grace
In choice of words fit for the ending place.
.
These must not be with disproportion lame,
Nor should an echo still repeat the same.—(ll. 39-44).

Rule II. "That ye keep the flowing;" *i. e.*, avoid variant feet and other irregularities. This must have suggested:

When verses like a milky torrent flow,
They equal temper in the poet show.—(ll. 13-14).

On halting feet the ragged poem goes,
With accents neither fitting verse nor prose.—(ll. 23-24).

Rule III. Avoid padding, and "frame your wordis according to the matter." A passage of similar import may be added from the advice to his son Henry in "The Basilikon Doron" (first edition, 1599). He warns him against "book-language, and pen and ink-horn termis, and least of all mignard and effeminate termis." Further: "If ye would write worthily choose subjects worthy of you, that be not full of vanity but of virtue, eschewing obscurity, and delighting ever to be plain and sensible. And

if ye writis in Verse, remember that it is not the principal part of a poem to rime right and flow well with many pretty wordis: but the chief commendation of a poem is, that when the verse shall be shaken sundrie in prose, it shall be found so rich in quick inventions, in poetic flowers, and in faire and pertinent comparisons, as it shall retain the lustre of a poem, although in prose."

Compare with this the following lines from Beaumont:

Pure phrase, fit epithets, a sober care
Of metaphors, descriptions cleare, yet rare.
Similitudes contracted smooth and round,
Not vext by learning, but with nature crowned.—(ll. 51-54).

To easie use of that peculiar gift,
Which poets in their raptures find most deare,
When actions by their lively sound appear.—(ll. 60-62).

For though in darksome words their skill they close,
They yet have perfect sense more pure and cleare,
Than envious Muses which sad garlands weare
Of dusky clouds, their strange conceits to hide.—(ll. 29-32).

Rule IV. Concerning figures, that they should be fitting.

Rule V. Avoid triteness.

Rule VII. Here follows in the "Reules and Cateles" a final parargaph, "tuiching the kyndis of verses"—clearly a study of Scotch metres, as will be seen by the attention given to bob-wheel stanzas and other intricate verse forms at that time in use in Scotch but not in English poetry. Scant justice is given to the iambic pentameter couplet, "rhymis whilk servis for lang histories, and yet are nocht verse." A nine-line stanza (aab-aab-bab), one of Dunbar's, is called verse "Heroicall."⁸

Beaumont naturally differs from James on this point:

The relish of the Muse consists in rhyme,
One verse must meet another like a chime.

.

⁸ It has been thought that these rules are based largely on French treatises and Gascoigne's "Art of Poesie." Undoubtedly the young student was familiar with these sources. But the very simplicity and whimsicality of the "Reules and Cateles" and their peculiar application to Scotch poetry show that they were largely a product of James's own shrewd consideration, under the guidance of his tutor Buchanan, of the poetry he had read.

In many changes these may be exprest:
But those that joynne most simply run the best:
Their form surpassing far the fether'd staves,
Vain care, and needless repetition saves.— (ll. 37-49).

It will be seen that scattered about in the sixty-six lines of his poem, Sir John has repeated most of the points made by the King. This and the peculiar use of the words "flowing" and "colouris" (surely metre and rhyme were the ordinary English terms at this time) indicate that he had read the royal critic pretty carefully. It is equally clear, however, that his own theories of versification, while similar to the King's, were not derived from them. As early as 1602, in his "Metamorphosis of Tobacco," he had written couplets of remarkable polish. "No one, indeed," says Mr. Gosse,⁹ "was in 1602 writing the heroic couplet as 'correctly' as the author of the 'Metamorphosis.' " At any rate we have in both cases an unusually classical body of doctrine. And as will appear later, Beaumont takes the utmost pains to carry out his theory in practice.

At this point it will be worth while to consider for a moment the influence of the King on the whole movement toward regularity. Of course this movement, this tendency to subordinate everything to exact rules and to avoid the extreme and fantastical, was by no means confined to literature, but corresponded, as Brunetière¹⁰ points out to have been the case in French literature, to a similar movement in education, in social life, and even in politics. But the influence we are thinking of here is something much more personal and definite. Here we have a King who pretended to be both poet and critic, and who at least was deeply interested in literature. That he was vain of his accomplishments in this direction we have plenty of evidence. Sir William Alexander, who was assisting the King in a metrical paraphrase of the Psalms, writes to Drummond as follows: "I

⁹ "The Jacobean Poets" (p. 107).

¹⁰ L'ordre et la discipline, l'exacte probité que le roi s'efforçait d'introduire dans les affaires et dans les mœurs, Malherbe eut comme la mission de les faire, lui, introduire pour le premier fois dans l'empire du caprice même, et de la fantaisie.—*La Réforme de Malherbe, Revue des Deux Mondes* (December 1, 1892).

received . . . the psalm you sent, which I think very well done. I had done the same myself long before it came; but He [the King] prefers his own to all else, though perchance when you see it, you will think it the worst of the three." May we not suppose that with his characteristic vanity and stubbornness he clung to the pedantic ideas on versification which he had learned and expounded as a youth, moulded thus to a certain extent the taste of the court, and forced the court poets of the time to form their verse according to his standards? Much of the verse of this time, moreover, may be termed courtly. At least half of Sir John Beaumont's poems, for example, fall in that class; most of Drummond's verse was written on occasions of royal deaths, visits, or anniversaries; and Ben Jonson, we know, had to earn with his pen his pension and yearly tun of port. Is it not fair to presume that these poets would take more pains to polish their verses when they knew that by this means they would please the royal taste? As Beaumont writes,¹¹

He leads the lawless poets of our times,
To smoother cadence, to exacter rhymes.

Whether to please the King or not, the poet just quoted wrote scarcely a line, after "The Metamorphosis," to which the most precise of critics might object in point of smoothness. He offended, like all the poets of his time, in overworked conceits, but his lines are always orderly. Weak and feminine endings, variant feet, unexpected cæsuras, extravagant or obscure phrasing — in fact everything condemned in the "Lines on the True Form" — are assiduously avoided. Note the absence of irregular elements indicated by the following table:

AUTHOR	Run-on Lines	Run-on Couplets	Medial Cæsuras	Variant Cæsuras	Feminine Endings	Weak Endings	Full Pauses	Trochees	Pyrrhics	Spondees	Anapæsts
Beaumont, 800 lines . . .	14	5	33	7	0	0	0	6	24	6	5
Drummond, 300 lines . .	12	2	37	8	6	1	0	7	25	9	5

The third member of this group of court poets whom we have

¹¹ "To the Glorious Memory . . . of King James" — Grosart (p. 126).

been studying is William Drummond of Hawthornden. Concerning him there is not a great deal to be said, for in many ways he is rather a late Elizabethan like Michael Drayton than a sympathetic member of the Jacobean group of poets who were feeling their way toward new standards of poetry. This fact is largely due to his provincial birth and his isolation during the latter part of his life at Hawthornden, removed from the influences which affected the poets of the metropolis. His very isolation, however, affected him in another way. It not only freed him from the influences to which the poets of his time were subject, but also caused him to be influenced more strongly by his reading in foreign literatures. The importance of Drummond, therefore, as a possible medium for the transmission of Continental tendencies needs to be pointed out.

Here our work is facilitated by the fact that we have a good deal of accurate information in regard to the poet's life and reading. His education, we learn, did not stop with the usual course at the University of Edinburgh. In his twenty-first year (1506) he passed through London to begin the study of law on the Continent. There he remained two or three years, part of the time at the University of Bruges and part of the time in Paris or travelling about in France. It is probable that his studies in law were not pursued very steadily and that he took plenty of time for reading and other diversions. It will be remembered that at this time François Malherbe, already over fifty years old, had begun that series of carefully polished odes by means of which he gradually created a revolution in poetic style. The *Ode sur l'attentat de Jacques des Isles* (1606) and the *Ode sur le voyage de Sedan* (1607) appeared during our poet's stay in France, and it is altogether likely that he read them and knew of the change they were creating — or better, felt the same influences which caused them and of which they in turn became the cause.

On his father's death in 1610, Drummond returned to Scotland and spent the remainder of his life on his quiet estate some ten miles out of Edinburgh. On his reading between 1606-14 we have a definite record. In French he had read Du Bartas and Rabelais complete, and of Ronsard *La Frauciade*,

*Amours, Odes, Elegies, and Eclogues.*¹² In 1610 he possessed in his library sixty-one Italian, one hundred and twenty French, and fifty English books, the figures probably indicating the distribution of his reading. In English literature his favorites seem to have been Spenser, Shakespeare and Michael Drayton, though various other poets are included in his library.

Some further clues to his tastes in literature are found in his writings. Of Drayton's "Poly-Olbion" he says: "It is one of the smoothest pieces I have seen in English, poetical and well executed; there are some pieces in him I dare compare with the best trans-marine poems."¹³ Another passage taken from Drummond's account of his conversations with Jonson is interesting because it suggests Drummond's knowledge and Jonson's ignorance of foreign languages. In a discussion of French literature Jonson had said that the best pieces of Ronsard were his odes. He had boasted also of plainly telling a certain French bishop that his translations were worthless. "All this," sub-joins Drummond in his chamber afterwards, "was to no purpose, for he neither doth understand French or Italiens." Jonson himself in one of his epigrams admits the weakness of his French. The latter's judgment of Drummond's verses was that "they were all good, especially my 'Epitaph of the Prince,' save that they smelled too much of the schools . . . yett that he wished, to please the King, that piece 'Forth Feasting' had been his own."

From such bits of conversation as these between Drummond and Jonson one may get many suggestions of their attitude toward the King, their interest in French literary tendencies, and their views on the theory of poetry. It is beyond the scope of this article to point out in Drummond's own verse definite traces of the influence of Continental literature. Undoubtedly such investigation would prove fruitful, for Drummond, after Spenser, is perhaps the most cosmopolitan of British poets. Thus, as Mr. Gosse points out, one of Drummond's songs is probably the only instance of the French fashion of alternating

¹² I quote Masson's "Life of Drummond."

¹³ "Notes of the Characters of Several Writers," Masson (p. 80).

couplets with masculine and couplets with feminine endings. He imitated and adapted the Italian poets also, and was particularly indebted to the French poet Desportes.

Except in his lyrics, Drummond wrote entirely in couplets. These, though more polished, resemble the couplets of Drayton rather than those of the later writers. They lack the urbanity and artificiality which characterize, for example, the lines of Waller. His "Tears on the Death of Mœliades" is perhaps the best specimen of his versification as it is of his power as a poet. The poem contains one hundred and ninety-six lines, of which eighteen per cent are run-on, with five run-on couplets. In "Forth Feasting," written two years later (1616) to celebrate the King's return to Scotland, and evidently admired by James, the proportion of run-on lines is reduced to five per cent, with no run-on couplets, a percentage as low as in Pope or Dryden.

Still, it must be remembered that the poet of Hawthornden is not to be thought of as a possible rival of Waller for the fame of having popularized the classical couplet. He was simply a writer who did not err with John Fletcher and Chapman on the side of freedom, nor with Donne and the satirists on the side of roughness, and was one of many others who in one way or another were working toward the later style. It must be remembered, too, that though Drummond gives no indication of his Scotch birth in his diction, and though he was on intimate terms with Jonson and Drayton, he was still outside the main stream of English literature. A true cosmopolitan, he seems to have gone as much to the poets of France and Italy for his models as to those nearer home.

Drummond nearly completes the list of important writers with classical tastes in the first quarter of the century. A more extended investigation of the movement would trace it in the poetry of Sandys and Waller and their followers to the time of Dryden. In Sandys would be found merely a painstaking versifier with little or no poetic inspiration of one kind or another; but it could be shown that his translation of Ovid's "Metamor-

¹⁴For French influence on Drummond, see *Modern Language Review* (October, 1907).

phoses" passed through eleven editions in the hundred years following his death, was praised by Pope, and was generally popular. In Waller, though his verse is less "correct" than that of either Beaumont or Drummond, the later style is fairly well developed, and studied conventionality of thought and phrase for the first time becomes conspicuous.

My purpose here is accomplished, however, if I have shown that no study of the rise of classicism is complete that fails to take into account the work of the earlier satirists, who of the writers of this period were in subject and point of view most akin to those of the eighteenth century; the rugged intellectuality of Ben Jonson; the remarkable refinement, restraint, and regularity of Beaumont and Drummond; and finally, the influence of King James.

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